

Retiree News

A Supplement to the Desert Airman

Friday, Oct. 31, 2003

Notes to Know

RAO in need of volunteers

The Retiree Activities Office is looking for volunteers. Those who have four hours free weekly and can help should contact the RAO at 228-5100 and leave a message, send an e-mail to retired@dm.af.mil or visit 5345 East Madera Street. Simply indicate your interests and talents for volunteer duties.

Retiree News Supplement

The retiree news supplement, published the last Friday of January, April, July and October, is no longer being mailed to individuals. Those unable to pick up a copy of the Desert Airman can access it online at www.dm.af.mil/pa/news/retiree_news_archive.html. Using Adobe Acrobat, follow the instructions on the Web site to view up to two years of retiree news supplements.

Society of Military Widows

The Society of Military Widows gathers at The Mirage Officer's Club at noon the third Saturday of each month for lunch and a general meeting. Widows of all services are invited to join. Call Luise Bell at 663-0279 for reservations one week before the meeting. The cost for lunch is \$10. Ladies not wanting lunch may join the group after lunch for the meeting and program. Members also meet at The Mirage Officer's Club the second Tuesday of each month for a birthday luncheon. Members with birthdays in the current month are especially encouraged to come to the event. For more information about the society and its activities, call Suzanne Shafe at 579-0789.

Auto registration

Davis-Monthan vehicle registration decals expiring in 2003 can now be renewed. A valid state vehicle registration form (temporary registrations are not accepted), proof of insurance, a valid state driver's license and a military or Department of Defense ID card are required. Motorcyclists should bring their safety cards. Vehicles can be reregistered at pass and registration, Building 3200, Mondays through Fridays

See *Notes*, Page 3

Flu shots vital as season approaches

It is flu shot time. Authorities recommend that those in the following categories are at highest risk and should receive the shots first:

- ◆ Age 50 years or older
 - ◆ Children 6 to 23 months old
 - ◆ Those in a household with, or a caregiver of, someone at high risk or children under 2 years of age
 - ◆ Those with a chronic health condition
 - ◆ Women more than 12 weeks pregnant
- All individuals should check with their

physician or watch for influenza clinics throughout the community at places like grocery stores or drug stores for availability of flu shots.

Flu shots will be available for retirees through the 355th Aerospace Medicine Squadron Allergy and Immunization Services Nov. 12 and 13 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Nov. 14 from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. For more information, call Staff Sgt. Jessica Despot, 355th AMDS NCO in charge of allergy and immunization services, at 228-1536.

Agents can help military shop on base

Do you know of anyone who is bedridden and non-ambulatory who is eligible to shop at the Commissary but whose caregiver is not eligible to enter the base? There is a way for that caregiver to be authorized to enter the base. The procedure starts with a doctor's letter indicating that the individual is homebound and can't shop for themselves. Then, contact pass and registration at 228-3223 for further instructions on obtaining an agent pass.

When a member who is authorized access to the base needs the assistance of a non-authorized caregiver to shop, the procedure is

different. The individuals must instead stop at the visitor's center at the main gate (temporarily at the Swan gate) and get a pass for the non-authorized caregiver. This procedure needs to be repeated each time they enter the base.

Retirees have worked hard for their Commissary privileges and it would be a shame not to be able to take advantage of them for as long as possible. Following proper protocol is a way to maintain privileges. If you know of people in either of these positions, help them make the arrangements for an agent's pass.

Individuals can prevent osteoporosis

More than 44 million Americans face the threat of osteoporosis, a disease that causes bones to become fragile and prone to breakage. Women, especially those past menopause with a family history of osteoporosis, are most susceptible to the disease. In fact, 80 percent of osteoporosis sufferers are female. Also at risk are smokers, men with low testosterone levels and the aging community as a whole.

Bones are living, changing tissue that constantly break down and reform. Until a person is about 30 years old, his or her bones are built and stored efficiently. As aging progresses, however, bones start to break down faster than they can be rebuilt. If a person is suffering from osteoporosis, his or her bones become weak and fragile.

While this disease can affect any bone in the body, osteoporosis-related fractures typically occur in the hip, spine and wrist. Hip fractures almost always require major surgery, and spinal

fractures can lead to such serious consequences as loss of height, severe back pain and deformity.

Unfortunately, osteoporosis is often referred to as the "silent disease" because its first stages, bone loss, occur with virtually no symptoms. In many cases, it isn't until a bone fractures or a vertebrae collapses that it becomes clear a patient has osteoporosis. For these reasons, prevention measures and early detection are key.

Talking with your care provider about your lifestyle, diet and family health history is the first step in detecting osteoporosis. Your provider may order a bone mineral density test to determine your condition and/or prescribe medications to prevent osteoporosis or to treat it.

Things you can do include eating a balanced diet rich in calcium and Vitamin D, get plenty of exercise, stop smoking and only drink alcohol in moderation.

See *Osteoporosis*, Page 3

VA cancer study

The Southern Arizona Veteran Administration Health Care System is part of a network working to enroll men in the National Cancer Institute's Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial.

Men may be eligible to participate in SELECT if they are aged 55 or older (African-American men are requested to be 50 years or older); have never had prostate cancer and have not had any other cancer, except nonmelanoma skin cancer, in the last five years; and are generally in good health.

Men interested in joining the study can call the VA at 792-1450, extension 5194 for more information about the study or prostate cancer.

They can also call the NCI's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-422-6237 for information in English and Spanish. NCI's Web site is <http://cancer.gov/select>. (Information for this article is courtesy the SAVAHCS newsletter, Health Trends, Volume 7, Issue 2)

Homeless in need of items

The Southern Arizona Veteran Administration Health Care System through their Voluntary Service program collect items for the homeless. They also take monetary donations which are spent on needed items. There is a great need for the following items:

◆ New men's white socks, underwear sizes 30 to 38 and used jeans sizes 28 to 38;

◆ Hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, combs, razors, lip balm and sunscreen;

◆ Food items such as granola bars, cereal bars, peanut butter, tuna, raisins, canned beef stew, canned vegetables, cracker/cheese or peanut butter packs;

◆ Miscellaneous items such as sewing kits, duffel bags, backpacks, laundry bags. Plastic grocery

bags can be used to distribute items.

If you can help with any of these items, or if you wish to make a cash donation, call Suzanne Perkins or Toni Bravo at the VA at 629-1839, for assistance with delivery. You can also bring any items to the Retiree Activities Office, 228-5100, or the Society of Military Widows Office located in Building 4310 on Madera Street on Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

VITA needs volunteers for 2003 tax season

Do you like to help people? Would you like to understand the income tax system better? Have you used the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance service in the past and thought it might be interesting to volunteer there? If so, the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base VITA program may be just what you are looking for. They are always in need of additional volunteers to help with the upcoming income tax season.

The D-M VITA program is jointly sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service, the Wing Legal Office and the Retiree Activities Office. Free training and materials are provided by the IRS, the Arizona Department of Revenue and VITA.

Volunteers provide help to taxpayers that have questions and assist them in preparing and filing federal and state tax returns free of charge. A few volunteers are also needed to staff the reception desk. It's a great service to the base community, but your help is needed to keep it going.

Volunteers attend a one-week training course in January and generally volunteer in the office one day each week from February through April 15 on a very flexible schedule.

If you think you might be interested in volunteering, or just have some questions, call Armen Dermen at 749-4812, Tom Rankin at 885-4218, RAO at 228-5100 or the VITA office at 228-3489.

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Clinic patients need to play active role

By Retired Col. Rita Gengler

In September, Staff Sgt. Stephen Martin, 355th Medical Group customer service office, spoke at a luncheon about services available at the clinic. His message included that patients need to take a more active part during provider visits. They should speak up and voice all concerns to the provider. Prepare a question list before arriving for the visit and then ask the questions. If necessary, have someone along to help understand the responses.

Martin also emphasized that if individuals receive a patient or consumer survey form from medical personnel, they should complete and return it. Patient input is important in

medical care planning.

The clinic sponsors health promotion services available to all. The Patient Resource Center, Building 400, Room 104, is available by calling 228-1543 and maintains literature about diseases and treatments, videos that can be checked out or viewed in the office as well as a staff that can help do internet research on a given health topic. The Health and Wellness Center, located in Building 4220, holds classes on a variety of subjects that include tobacco cessation, cholesterol, diabetes control, nutrition and fitness evaluations. For more information on class dates, or to sign-up, call 228-2294. For assistance with accessibility to care issues, call Martin's office at 228-2919.

Osteoporosis

Continued from Page 1

"By maintaining a healthy diet and active lifestyle, you can lower your osteoporosis risk and keep your bones strong for a lifetime. For more information, talk with your provider or visit the National Osteoporosis Foundation Web site at www.nof.org. (Information from TriWest Healthcare Alliance Monthly Article Series for June 2002.)

Former Sampson members

The Sampson Air Force Base Veterans Association is looking for veterans and retirees formerly assigned to the New York base as trainees or permanent party for its annual reunions and data for a museum. Family members of deceased assignees are also encouraged to contact the organization to give information about the member. Please call William "Bill" Thomas at (732) 549-9634 or e-mail wwt1219@aol.com.

Notes

Continued from Page 1

from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. except holidays. For more information, call 228-3224.

New Call Center hours

Effective July 1, the TRICARE Information Call Center is open Mondays through Fridays 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. eastern time, excluding federal holidays. Toll-free numbers are: TRICARE for Life at 1-888-363-5433, senior pharmacy at 1-877-363-6337 and TRICARE online at 1-866-363-3932.

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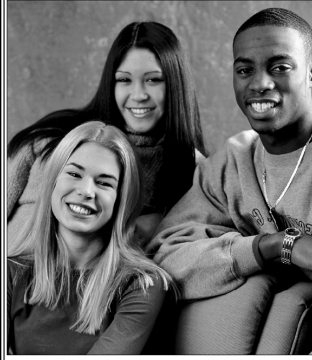
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